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# THE INFLUENCE OF NEWSPAPER PRESENTATIONS UPON THE GROWTH OF CRIME AND OTHER ANTI-SOCIAL ACTIVITY (*Continued*)

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## CHAPTER IV METHODS USED IN THE PRESENT STUDY

Two kinds of fact regarding the influence of newspapers upon the growth of crime and other anti-social activity have been collected in this investigation: direct evidence of newspaper suggestion, consisting of cases in which the cause and effect relation between the newspaper and anti-social activity is known to have existed; and analyses of the relative amounts of space devoted by newspapers to anti-social and other matter. The latter constitutes a study of the possible objective sources of the stimuli in the newspaper to anti-social activity; the former some of the responses to these stimuli. Both studies are necessary preliminaries to any adequate control of the anti-social activity under consideration here.

The direct evidence was collected from all the available sources, from newspapers themselves, from persons who came in contact with criminals or other anti-social persons, or with juvenile offenders, and from court records. In addition 201 question-lists<sup>1</sup> were sent out, 74 to prison and reformatory officials, 75 to juvenile court judges and other judges, 45 to chief probation officers, and 7 to other persons. In return, 20 replies

<sup>1</sup> The question-list sent out was as follows:

1. Do you know of any persons, young or old, who have received the idea of committing some crime or abnormal act from the newspapers?
2. If so, will you answer the following questions regarding them: (a) name and place; (b) description of act committed and circumstances; (c) newspaper from which the idea was obtained; date and place of publication; (d) if there is a court record, please cite it in addition.
3. Did you get your information from the person's own confession, from

were received, 7 from prison and reformatory officials, 3 from juvenile court judges, 8 from chief probation officers, and 2 from other sources.<sup>2</sup> The results from all these sources are collected in chap. vi, but they are too extensive for publication here.

The object in view in analyzing the material in newspapers was to get a clear and accurate idea of the relative amounts of space given to news and other matter relating to anti-social and other activities. This was undertaken not because the actual amount of anti-social matter in a newspaper is known to bear a direct relation to the growth of crime, or because we have any evidence to show that changes in the two bear a constant relation to one another. (A study of this matter would be an important one to undertake.) The value of the quantitative analysis undertaken here, which is based upon a qualitative analysis of the material measured, is conceived to lie first in its more exact characterization of the newspaper matter which we are considering as stimuli to activity, this characterization being indispensable to any changes in the newspapers. One of the first questions asked by those to whom this matter is being mentioned for the first time is, "But is there *much* of this news of crime in our papers and *how much*?" This question implies the second reason for the value of the quantitative study, that the amount of anti-social matter of certain types is a factor which enters (1) into the conscious, or unconscious selection of reading matter on the part of individual readers, and (2) into the possible length of time during which the attention is occupied with anti-social matter. For the purpose stated above it would not suffice merely to count all of the matter in the paper dealing with anti-social themes and to compare that amount with all the matter not concerned with anti-social subjects—a method which has been

the fact that the newspaper account and the act corresponded closely, from the fact that the act followed quickly upon the account?

4. Can you refer me to anyone else from whom information of this sort could be got?

Please number answers to correspond with questions.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Anthony Comstock, secretary of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, and Mrs. G. H. Britton, superintendent of the Juvenile Protection Association, Chicago, Ill.

followed in previous treatments. Such a comparison, while it would have some interest, would not have any special significance, because, in the first place, it would be too general, and because in the second place, there is no real basis of comparison between matter qualitatively different. In other words, such a comparison does not make clear the fact that matter relating to anti-social circumstances and activities appears in different forms, some in the literary section of the paper, some in the "news proper," some in book reviews, and still other matter in advertisements, sporting news, and editorials. Nor does it take account of the fact that a definite amount of matter in newspapers is of such a nature as never to be anti-social in character—for example; market and financial news, legal, marriage and death notices, weather reports, and miscellaneous matter, such as "beauty talks," recipes for housekeepers, etc. Any adequate analysis and estimate of newspaper matter must be based upon a careful classification of the material in papers; and the percentages of matter dealing with anti-social subjects must be carefully classified and related to the total of that kind of material of which it is a part, and not to the whole of the matter. Only thus is an accurate picture to be made of the material in newspapers, and a working basis arrived at for changes in newspapers.

Consequently, newspaper matter was classified as follows: I, Regular news; II, Critical, including book reviews, theatrical news and criticism, musical criticism; III, Literary and illustrations (exclusive of illustrations which are organic parts of the printed piece and which are included with the printed matter with which they occur); IV, Editorial; V, Sporting news; VI, Market and financial news; VII, Notices, i.e., weather reports, marriages, deaths, society, and miscellaneous items. Advertisements were totally excluded from tabulation, and sporting news was excluded from among the tabulated sources of anti-social suggestion; the former, not because considered unimportant but because the limits of the present study precluded the special treatment which their qualitatively different effect demands; the latter not because it is held not to be the source of much brutalizing effect, but because again the limits of the present

study debarred a consideration of this type of suggestion which it is difficult, with our present evidence, to analyze and prove.<sup>3</sup> Material falling under some of the classifications, as VI and VII, would evidently contain little or no anti-social matter.

The unit used in measuring newspaper matter was the inch instead of the item, because the former gives a comparative quantitative space estimate, which the latter, a unit of varying size, does not afford.<sup>4</sup> The total amount of matter under each heading, as well as the total amount of anti-social matter under each heading, was measured.

The general basis for the definition of "anti-social matter" was explained above<sup>5</sup> in connection with the word *anti-social*. It was stated that this basis is founded on the objective effects of newspaper matter, its suggested consequences, rather than its intent. Any kind of matter, therefore, which may furnish suggestion to anti-social activity is considered anti-social. More specifically, it includes, on the side of content: (1) not merely such matter as would obviously and technically be regarded as dealing with crime juridically considered, but (2) all material which a scientific psychology and psychiatry would classify as affording stimuli to anti-social, that is, criminal and immoral, acts.<sup>6</sup> This classification is not less true to the facts than one based on a juridical definition, but it is more specifically inclusive of the various types of matter which incite to anti-social activity, which, if not criminal, may be either immediately or indirectly criminal in its results. That is to say, it includes matter which not only describes acts criminal in the legal sense, but also those acts which are immoral but not legally criminal. And on the other hand, it also includes not only matter which stimulates

<sup>3</sup> A separate study of both advertisements and of sporting news should be made, the former with special reference to medical advertisements and their effect. Cf. Survey (June 25, 1910), 503. The efforts to prevent the exhibition of moving pictures of the Johnson-Jeffries prize fight, together with less widespread but none the less strong protest regarding the attention given by newspapers in news columns and pictures to the same fight, are evidences of the popular conviction as to the effect of sporting news.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. chap. ii.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. chap. i.

<sup>6</sup> It makes little or no difference in what form this material happens to appear—whether as news, stories, book reviews, etc. Cf. chap. ii.

directly to crime, but also such items as stimulate directly to immorality and thus indirectly to crime. There is no real division line here between the legally criminal and the immoral, though the two are not coterminous and the latter is perhaps a wider category than the former. To stop with the legally criminal would be to underestimate the anti-social effect of much newspaper suggestion (as also of much suggestion from five-cent theaters and other dramatic performances), because descriptions of legally criminal acts may incite both to criminal acts and to immoral acts, and descriptions of immoral acts may incite both to other immoral acts and to criminal acts. In other words, a description of a criminal act may incite to another criminal act or only to an immoral act, while a description of an immoral act may stimulate not only to another immoral act but also even to a legally criminal act. On the basis of this explanation, therefore, the matter classified as anti-social was of two general sorts:

I. Descriptions of criminal acts: (*a*) inciting to other criminal acts; (*b*) inciting to immoral acts.

II. Descriptions of immoral acts: (*a*) inciting to other immoral acts; (*b*) inciting to criminal acts.

The criterion here worked out is not as definite as the one based on a juridical or legal definition, for it depends, in a larger degree, upon the judgment and experience of the person using it and does not work as automatically as does the juridical criterion or category. It depends for its utility upon the knowledge and use of psychological principles. A large body of psychological and psychiatric facts, however, are at the basis of it. It becomes, consequently, more useful than the juridical criterion, in that it includes all types of significant anti-social relation between the newspaper and activity, that is, it takes care of the social and ethical facts in the case. Moreover, it ultimately furnishes a basis for a legal or juridical definition. It is one of the fundamental principles of jurisprudence that formulations of law follow customs, that certain moral and social principles are recognized generally before they are formulated as law. "Moral notions progress faster and develop quicker than law. The latter presents, so to speak, a lower step in de-

velopment, a step which morals have already taken."<sup>7</sup> To leave out of account, therefore, a large body of activities classified as immoral but not illegal would be to ignore the important relation of this type of activity to law.

Of this anti-social matter, as just defined, three divisions or classes were made on the basis of degree of possible suggestiveness in order to show the qualitative differences in "anti-social matter." The first and narrowest division includes what may be termed obvious material for suggestion, that is, material dealing with crime or immorality in such a detailed and striking manner as to constitute what the psychologist and psychiatrist would recognize as a most probable medium of anti-social suggestion. Examples are: detailed accounts of murders, suicides, robberies, rape, abnormal sexual relations and exhibitions, etc. The Thaw trial is a specific example of this type.

The second division includes matter of a less detailed sort, in which details and bare facts of murder and other crimes, etc., are not directly presented, but indirectly indicated and perhaps called up quite vividly. Examples are: references to crimes and immoral acts which have been detailed at great length in the papers, or short, relatively undetailed accounts of the kind of fact mentioned in the preceding example. Ordinarily an item is classified on the basis of its immediate content, although its reference to previous related items must be taken into consideration.

The third division includes all other mentions of anti-social facts. The matter in this division *may* be suggestive in various ways which it is difficult to get at. A mere two-line mention of the arrest of a murderer may, for example, call up all of the anti-social images which a former detailed account of that same murder, or of another, has established in the neural set. Vague

<sup>7</sup> N. M. Korkunov, *General Theory of Law* (Boston Book Co., 1909), 63. See also on this same point: Roscoe Pound, "The Causes of Dissatisfaction with the Administration of Justice," *Report of American Bar Association* (1906), XXIX, 399; Carter, *Law, Its Origin, Growth and Function* (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), 320; Augustus Pulazky, *Theory of Law and Civil Society* (T. Fisher Unwin, 1886), 312; G. F. Puchta, *Cursus der Institutionen* (Breitkopf und Härtel, 1850), Bd. I, S. 31.

statements concerning the illegal dealings of the Sugar Trust, or of the Beef Trust, may set up in the minds of young people and others standards of public and commercial dishonesty which have a vague but real effect upon later conduct. However, this cannot be taken for granted or too closely insisted upon.

The boundary line between these classifications of newspaper matter are not and cannot be either wholly distinct or exact. The categories are not made too inclusive, however. They are not so inclusive as to cover matter that is not suggestive within the limits established above. As a matter of fact, any news may be suggestive in an anti-social direction. Psychologically the criterion of this suggestiveness is exceedingly indefinite and shifting. No more definite one, however, is offered by psychology, and the present analysis can be pushed only so far as the psychological knowledge and experience already worked out admit. The difference between divisions III and II is a difference of the directness with which the stimulus can go over into activity. Stories of graft, as they are ordinarily told in the newspapers, are likely to go over into activity of an anti-social type less directly and immediately, while detailed accounts of murders or robberies, because of their stronger motor or activity appeal, may go over at once. The situation might, however, be reversed, and for this and other reasons given above, all of these categories are necessary to cover all possible stimuli to anti-social activity. The basis of I and II is *treatment* of anti-social facts; of III the mere mention of such facts.<sup>8</sup>

The following classification of the anti-social matter in one of the papers analyzed will serve to illustrate the kinds of items included in each of the three categories. Only the titles of articles are given. The reason for including each item under its

<sup>8</sup> The most inclusive classification, III, is that used supposedly by all other tabulators of anti-social material in newspapers—supposedly, because the basis of their classification is not made sufficiently clear by them. Qualitative distinctions in newspaper matter based upon the possible objective effect of such matter have not been made by previous tabulators. Their classifications have been, as has been pointed out above, on the basis of content of items. Classification III is based upon the mere content of items and is consequently most nearly like former classifications.



TABLE I  
ILLUSTRATING THE CLASSIFICATION OF NEWSPAPER MATTER UNDER THE THREE CATEGORIES\*

I	II	III
MOBS BEAT POLICEMAN (referring to Philadelphia car strike). (Miss Addams' statement.†)	INDICT DAVIES IN C. H. FOSTER EXTORTION CASE. (Unnecessary details.)	BETTS CHARGES PLOT IN COAL LAND CASE.
EXPERTS BATTLE AT STOUT TRIAL. (Murder trial; arousing curiosity, beautiful young girl exciting sentimental sympathy.)	GIRL'S ESCORT STABBED; CRAWLS MILE FOR AID. (Wording and situation arouse abnormal interest.)	MERCHANT SHOT, 5 IN JAIL: RESULT OF CARD GAME.
PICTURE OF MOUNTED POLICEMAN DISPERSING MOB. (Definiteness of act, firing into mob.)	ELECTROCUTE NEGRO SLAYER. (Instils admiration for negro criminal by quoting his sentimental prayer.)	GEM SUSPECT BROUGHT BACK.
NEW RIOTS IN PHILADELPHIA. (Miss Addams' statement.†)	HOTEL LASALLE WOMAN GUEST FOUND INJURED. (Sensational situation, mystery.)	BARON SLAIN IN PISTOL DUEL BY FORMER FRIEND.
CAR STRIKE LEADERS DECLARE DYNAMITE PRISONERS MARTYRS. (Part of car strike item above.)	FUGITIVE NURSE HELD AS THIEF RAVES IN CELL (Unnecessary abnormal details.)	MYSTERY IN DEATH OF FRIEND OF SENATOR QUAY.
"I SHALL GO FREE," SAYS GIRL ON TRIAL AS SLAYER. (Stout trial continued.)	WRAITH OF OLD LOVE DARKENS PATHWAY OF NEW. (Idea of immoral conduct.)	RAID SALOON AFTER THE FRAY.
MAN FORGING "LOAN" FROM RICH FACES COURT. (Details of getting money under false pretenses.)	PACKERS FEAR INDICTMENTS IN CITY THIS WEEK. (Disregarding legal summons.‡)	(All of these items are more or less bare statements of criminal or other anti-social acts.)
SEEK TO SET DAY FOR TRIAL OF REV. KEMP. (Recalls concrete abnormal details.)		

\* Such items as the following, entitled "Woman Pinned Under Car Half-Hour, Dies," giving details of injuries, have not been included. A large class of items presenting details of deaths from epilepsy, etc., facts concerning insane asylums, as well as much sporting news, has not been included in any of these categories. Nevertheless, this class of items often have an abnormal effect (people occasionally becoming mentally unbalanced from reading them), and are quite unnecessary in the newspaper.

† For ten years I had lived in a neighborhood which was by no means criminal, and yet during October and November of 1898 we were startled by ten murders within a radius of ten blocks. A little investigation of details and motives, the accident of a personal acquaintance with two of the criminals, made it not in the least difficult to trace the murders back to the influence of the war. Simple people who read of carnage and bloodshed easily receive suggestions. Habits of self-control which have been but slowly and imperfectly acquired quickly break down when such stress is put upon them."—Jane Addams, *Newer Ideals of Peace*, 43.

‡ "Boys and girls read about graft and dishonesty among people in the supposedly higher walks of life, and the example is a powerful thing for evil in their lives. Children become calloused more or less to vice, and get really false notions, because what they read in the papers is after all the exceptional case, and too many of us are prone to judge the general condition by what is, after all, only an exceptional or special condition."—Ben B. Lindsey, *The Light*, September, 1906.

TABLE I—*Continued*

I	II	III
HOLD MAN FOR SENDING GIRL POISON. (Details of method.)	PHYSICIAN ENDS LIFE AS FAMILY LOOKS ON. (Sensational details.)	
\$525 LOOTED FROM SAFE. (Method given.)	ARREST IN HOTEL RAID. (Description of disorderly conduct.)	
ELEANOR ROBSON IN HER LATEST AND HER FUTURE RÔLE. (Picture making sexual appeal.)	WIFE SHOOTS AT MAN SHE SAYS DENIED HER FOOD. (Sensational details.)	
HOW JACQUES CODELL DIED. (Short story describing how a spiritualist suggested idea of his death to a man until he killed himself.)		

particular category is given in parenthesis directly beneath the title.

In the following chapter the results obtained by the method outlined above will be stated and explained.

## CHAPTER V

### TABULAR ANALYSIS OF THE PAPERS STUDIED

With the definition of anti-social matter determined upon as explained in the preceding chapter, the measurement of papers was undertaken. The analysis was confined to an intensive study of a comparatively small number of representative American papers exclusive of Sunday issues.<sup>1</sup> The papers analyzed were, first, the daily papers taken by the Chicago Public Library for three different dates, November 1 and 30, 1909, and January 3, 1910. The issues for those dates were not selected by the writer, but were merely those which it was convenient for the library to give away. This set of papers comprised, in general and in

<sup>1</sup> Since the object of the analysis was to obtain comparative results as far as possible, the Sunday issues could not be included, because, (1) a large number of representative papers have no Sunday issues, and (2) the Sunday editions represent characteristics so diverse from the week-day papers in size, arrangement of matter, and apportionment of space that they could not be included in an average which was to be compared with another average in which a Sunday edition was lacking. They demand separate treatment, therefore; but it was not possible within the limits of this study to consider them.

the main, the more conservative newspapers of the country. Altogether they numbered 130 for the three issues, though some were in such mutilated condition that they could not be analyzed, and, therefore, data from only 103 issues appear in the tables. Second, the *Chicago E*—— and the *Chicago D*—— were analyzed for the month of February, 1910, and the *New York A*——, the *New York B*——, the *New York C*——, and the *Denver G*——, each for seven days in the same month, February 18 to 27 inclusive. These Chicago, Denver, and New York papers were chosen because they are not among those taken by the Chicago Public Library, because they are well-known papers of large circulation, and because they are said to represent certain characteristic types of the American newspaper.<sup>2</sup>

The newspapers were carefully read and the anti-social matter in them marked as follows: The matter falling under division I of Table I<sup>3</sup> was numbered (4), the matter falling under division II of Table I was numbered (3), and all other mention of anti-social activities was numbered (2). This numbering held for matter under all the headings except that marked "editorial," in which case a slightly different classification was necessarily used. The editorials dealing with anti-social facts from a constructively social viewpoint were marked (2), those dealing with anti-social facts from an anti-social viewpoint were marked (3).

The following form of table was used for tabulating the first results and for purposes of computation:

	Reg. News				Critical				Literary				Editorial			Sporting	Markets	Notices
	I	2	3	4	I	2	3	4	I	2	3	4	I	2	3			
No. Inches . .																		
Percentage . .																		

<sup>2</sup> With the exception of *Chicago E*——, a morning paper which has been characterized as one of the best newspapers in the country of the moderately conservative kind, these papers have generally been designated as "yellow journals" and some of them of the worst type. These papers were chosen for analysis on the basis of the popular classification given them. The results of the analysis in this chapter will throw some light on the justice of this classification.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Table I, chap. iv.

Column 1 under each heading represents the total number of inches of that class of matter; column 2, all the matter dealing with anti-social facts in that class, including also columns 3 and 4; column 4 represents matter falling under division I of Table I; column 3 represents the sum of divisions I and II of the same table, that is, the sum of matter which constitutes an obvious medium of suggestion and of matter of a less detailed sort, as described in chap. iv. Divisions I and II were both grouped under 3 in order to show more graphically the total percentage of matter that should be removed from the newspaper in making any constructive change in it. The results were then combined in the tables that follow. These results may seem meager, but they were all that could be obtained from a study carried on accurately and intensively within the limited time of the investigation. They comprise, however, accurate averages from representative papers of a fairly wide range as to type, time, and territory.

Table II represents a comparison of the general news section of the papers taken by the Chicago Public Library for the three dates of November 1 and 30, 1909, and January 3, 1910, with averages for all the papers for the three dates taken together, and with totals for all the papers taken together for each date. Columns 1, 2, 3, and 4 under each date represent the total number of inches of news of the types described above as indicated in these columns.<sup>4</sup> The figures immediately below those in inches are the corresponding percentages, on the basis of the total number of inches of "news proper" taken as 100 per cent. The totals for November 1, 1909, in percentage terms, are: column 2, 7.63; column 3, 5.58; and column 4, 4.72, as contrasted with the percentages for January 3, 1910: column 2, 13.61; column 3, 7.65; and column 4, 6.24, and further with November 30, 1909: column 2, 15.25; column 3, 8.14; and column 4, 6.52. These total percentages and averages represent results from 103 of the rather more conservative papers in the country, ranging from 0.69 per cent for column 2 in the *Springfield H*——— of November 1, to 21.27

<sup>4</sup> Newspaper columns vary in length in different papers. It was necessary, therefore, to reduce columns to a common basis of inches.

TABLE II  
GENERAL NEWS SECTION

	November 1, 1909				November 30, 1909				January 3, 1910				Average—Three Dates			
	I	2	3	4	I	2	3	4	I	2	3	4	I	2	3	4
Number of papers 103...																
Total number inches ....	27,411.75	2,001	1,530.75	1,292.50	25,703.75	3,033.75	2,009.25	1,682	20,276.25	3,084.25	2,238.75	1,816.25	82,481.50	10,009	5,668.75	4,791.30
Percentages .....	100	7.63	5.58	4.72	100	15.25	8.14	6.52	100	13.61	7.65	6.24	100	12.13	6.87	5.80

TABLE III

	REGULAR NEWS SECTION								LITERARY AND PICTORIAL SECTION							
	<i>Chicago D</i> —				<i>Chicago E</i> —				<i>Chicago D</i> —				<i>Chicago E</i> —			
	I	2	3	4	I	2	3	4	I	2	3	4	I	2	3	4
Total inches .....	10,222	3,799	2,364	2,046	19,072	3,775.50	1,604.5	1,417.5	6,267	906	906	894	2,749.5	12	..	..
Percentages .....	100	37.16	23.02	20.02	100	18.90	8.48	7.10	100	14.45	14.45	14.27	100	.44	..	..

TABLE IV  
GENERAL NEWS SECTION

	<i>New York A</i> —				<i>New York B</i> —				<i>New York C</i> —				<i>Denver G</i> —			
	I	2	3	4	I	2	3	4	I	2	3	4	I	2	3	4
February 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26.....																
Total inches.....	4,068	1,728	883	759	5,340	2,018	424	316	6,388	2,121	795	555	5,714	1,522	795	615
Percentages .....	100	42.47	21.70	18.65	100	37.78	7.94	5.91	100	33.20	12.44	7.71	100	26.63	14.08	10.76

per cent for column 2 in the *Toledo I*——— of the same date; for November 30, ranging from 1.04 per cent for column 2 in the *Springfield H*——— to 29.61 per cent for column 2 in the *New York K*; and for January 3, 1910, ranging from 1.61 per cent for column 2 in the *Springfield H*——— to 26.14 per cent for column 2 in the *Philadelphia L*———. The corresponding, or minimum and maximum, figures for column 4 on the same dates are: 0.32 in the *Louisville M*——— and 15.59 in the *Tacoma O*——— for November 1; 0.00 in the *Springfield H*——— and 14.65 in the *Philadelphia L*——— for January 3; and for November 30, 0.27 in the *Springfield H*——— and 12.68 in the *Omaha P*———.

Table III represents a comparison of the regular news section and the literary and pictorial section of the *Chicago D*——— with those of the *Chicago E*——— for February, 1910. The average percentages of anti-social news for the *Chicago D*——— are 37.16 for column 2, 23.02 for column 3, and 20.02 for column 4, as compared with *Chicago E*———'s 18.90 per cent for column 2, 8.48 per cent for column 3, and 7.10 per cent for column 4. The percentages of anti-social matter in the literary and pictorial section are, for the *Chicago D*———, 14.45 for both columns 2 and 3, and 14.27 for column 4, as compared with 0.44 per cent in column 2 alone, for the *Chicago E*———.

Table IV contains a comparison of the general news sections of three New York papers and of the *Denver G*——— for seven corresponding days in February, 1910. The *New York A*——— has the highest percentages in all three columns, 42.47 for column 2, 21.70 for column 3, and 18.45 for column 4 respectively. The *New York B*——— has the lowest percentage of news, in column 4, 5.91 as compared with 18.65 for the *New York A*———, 7.71 for the *New York C*———, and 10.76 for the *Denver G*———. The percentage of news which would fall under the second division of Table I, found by subtracting column 4 from 3, is lowest in the *New York B*———, 2.43, and is slightly higher in the other three papers: 3.05 in the *New York A*———, 3.38 in the *Denver G*———, and 4.73 in the *New York C*———.

Comparing the percentages of the New York papers and of the *Denver G*—— for columns 2 and 4 with corresponding percentages for the two Chicago papers here analyzed, and ranging them according to size of percentage in each column, we have the result given in Table V.

TABLE V  
COMPARISON OF PERCENTAGES OF ANTI-SOCIAL NEWS IN COLUMNS 2 AND 4

COLUMN 2		COLUMN 4	
Name of Newspaper	Percentage	Name of Newspaper	Percentage
<i>New York A</i> ———	42.47	<i>Chicago D</i> ———	20.02
<i>New York B</i> ———	37.78	<i>New York A</i> ———	18.65
<i>Chicago D</i> ———	37.16	<i>Denver G</i> ———	10.76
<i>New York C</i> ———	33.20	<i>New York C</i> ———	7.71
<i>Denver G</i> ———	26.63	<i>Chicago E</i> ———	7.10
<i>Chicago E</i> ———	18.90	<i>New York B</i> ———	5.91

Table VI is made up of the average percentages for sections I, II, III, and IV of all the papers studied. Thus it represents the average percentages for the three dates of the 103 papers in Table II, the averages for the *Chicago E*—— and *Chicago D*—— for the month of February, the averages for the *New York A*——, *New York B*——, and *New York C*——, and the *Denver G*—— for seven days in February, 1910.

Table VII is the most inclusive of all the tables. It represents a comparison of the six papers for certain common dates, February 18 to 27, inclusive, omitting the twenty-first for which date one paper was lacking. The first column, marked "Total Space," contains the total number of inches of matter, exclusive of advertising space, in each of these papers for the dates mentioned, that is, the sum of the first columns under each section. The upper figures for each paper under each section represent in the first columns the total number of inches of each kind of matter, and in columns 2, 3, and 4 the number of inches of anti-social matter under each category for each kind of matter. Under sections V, VI, and VII, as has previously been explained, only the total number of inches of that kind of matter appears. The lower figures for each paper in every case are percentages of the "total space." This table is significant as representing a

TABLE VI

	Regular News Section				Critical				Literary and Pictures				Editorial		
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3
103 Papers for November 1, 1909, 30, 1909, and January 3, 1910.....	100	12.13	6.87	5.80	100	.17	.17	..	100	1.46	1.46	1.14	100	.68	.75
<i>Chicago D</i> .....	100	37.16	23.02	20.02	100	3.22	3.22	1.55	100	14.45	14.45	14.27	100	..	6.58
<i>Chicago E</i> .....	100	18.90	8.48	7.10	100	4.10	3.20	2.30	100	..	..	..	100	1.54	..
<i>New York A</i> .....	100	42.47	21.70	18.65	100	25.93	25.93	25.93	010	11.37	11.37	10.78	100	22.11	10.53
<i>New York C</i> .....	100	33.20	12.44	7.71	100	12.43	12.43	8.38	*(687)	..	..	..	100	1.82	1.21
<i>New York B</i> .....	100	37.78	7.94	5.91	*(557)	..	..	..	100	2.93	2.93	2.93	100	10.37	4.07
<i>Denver G</i> .....	100	26.63	14.08	10.76	*(91.75)	..	..	..	*(2,276.5)	..	..	..	*(452)	..	..

\* Inches are given here instead of percentages because there was no basis of comparison, i.e., no anti-social matter from which to estimate percentages.



TABLE VII

Name of Paper	Total Space	General News Section				Critical				Literary and Illustrations				Editorial			Sporting	Market, Financial, Etc.	Miscellaneous
		I	2	3	4	I	2	3	4	I	2	3	4	I	2	3			
<i>Chicago D</i> .....	6,862.5	2,909	899	550	407	360	3	3	3	1,451	130	130	130	300	..	64	1,538.5	311	93
<i>Chicago E</i> .....	100	42.39	13.10	8.01	6.81	5.25	.04	.04	.04	21.14	1.89	1.89	1.89	4.37	..	.03	22.42	4.53	1.36
<i>Chicago F</i> .....	8,282.5	51.76	11.97	443	395	289	14	14	14	602	12	..	..	380	19	..	974	1,376.5	485
<i>New York A</i> .....	100	62.49	14.45	5.35	4.77	3.49	.17	.17	.17	7.27	14	..	..	4.59	.23	..	11.76	16.62	586
<i>New York B</i> .....	6,883	3,502	1,427	747	663	54	14	14	14	1,871	263	263	246	270	50	40	1,105	21	..
<i>New York C</i> .....	100	49.66	20.87	10.79	9.29	.58	.15	.15	.15	28.42	3.23	3.23	3.15	3.71	.91	.43	17.35	.31	..
<i>New York D</i> .....	7,953	5,598	1,827	545	450	264	22	14	8	482	..	..	..	274	9	..	631	514	190
<i>New York E</i> .....	100	71.62	21.15	7.92	6.03	2.41	.22	.14	.08	6.26	..	..	..	3.60	.09	.06	8.53	5.03	2.55
<i>New York F</i> .....	9,425	4,650	1,737	378	287	378	..	..	..	6.72	24	24	24	208	28	11	1,008	1,612	897
<i>New York G</i> .....	100	50.67	18.58	4.44	3.15	4.70	..	..	..	6.91	.20	.20	.20	2.28	.24	.09	9.87	16.90	8.68
<i>Denver G</i> .....	9,826	4,693.5	1,225	748.25	585	..	..	..	..	17.64	..	..	..	328.5	..	..	1,885.5	1,022.5	4125
<i>Total inches</i> .....	100	47.77	15.52	7.61	5.95	..	..	..	..	18.16	..	..	..	3.34	..	..	16.14	10.41	4.20
<i>Percentage</i> .....	49,232	26,528.5	8,312	3,411.25	2,847	1,345	53	45	39	6,862	429	417	400	1,706.5	166	121	6,902	4,837	2,077.5
<i>Papers analyzed for the Three</i>	100	53.88	16.88	6.93	5.78	2.73	.11	.09	.08	13.04	.87	.35	.81	3.58	.22	.25	14.02	9.87	4.22
<i>Dates mentioned above...</i>	100	82,481.5	10,009	5,868.75	4,791.75	4,802.75	8	8	..	11,610.75	170	170	132	9,617.5	65	72	16,081	20,391.75	9,855.75
	100	53.27	6.46	3.79	3.09	3.10	.005	.005	..	7.50	.11	.11	.09	6.21	.04	.05	10.39	13.17	.62

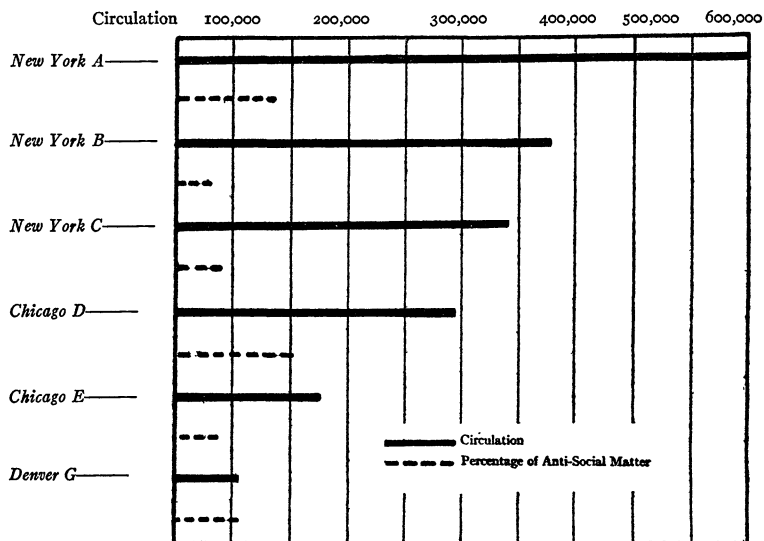
comparative intensive study of the relative apportionment of matter in these papers and of the percentages of anti-social matter in relation to the entire paper (exclusive of advertisements) rather than to each class section separately. In the general news section the percentages range for mention of anti-social facts (column 2) from 21.15 per cent for the *New York C*—— to 15.52 per cent for the *Denver G*; for column 3, from 10.79 per cent in the *New York A*—— to 4.44 per cent in the *New York B*——; and for column 4, from 9.29 per cent in the *New York A*—— to 3.15 per cent in the *New York B*——. It will be seen from these figures that even when the percentages are taken on the basis of the total reading-matter in the paper they are still high for this class of papers. It should be noted also that it so happened that the dates here analyzed did not include any special criminal "sensation" or "epidemic"; hence the averages are lower than they otherwise would be.

The figures so far given have not had any reference to the matter of the circulation of the newspapers. Consequently, the comparative potential influence of these newspapers with respect to the number of people by whom they are read has been ignored. The following diagram, Table VIII, indicates a more significant fact for purposes of comparison in that it shows side by side the approximate circulation and the percentage of anti-social matter in column 4 of each paper.

A comparison of the general news section and the editorial section of all the papers studied is especially to be noted in this table. It appears from these figures that whereas the *Chicago D*—— has 20.02 per cent of matter falling under column 4 in its news columns, none of its editorial space is devoted to a treatment of these anti-social facts in a socially constructive manner (column 2), while 6.58 per cent of the space in its editorial columns is devoted to editorials dealing with anti-social matter from an anti-social point of view (column 3). The *Chicago E*——, on the other hand, devoted 1.54 per cent of the space in its editorial columns to discussion of anti-social facts from a social viewpoint (column 2), and did not, within the period studied, deal with such matter at all from an anti-social stand-

point. The *New York A*——— leads all the other papers studied in the percentage of its editorial space (22.11, column 2) given to a constructively social discussion of anti-social matter, and likewise in the percentage (10.53, column 3) given to an anti-social discussion of such matter. The *Chicago E*——— and the *New York A*——— represent the extremes for the papers studied.

TABLE VIII



In this table the paper with the greatest circulation, the *New York A*———, is taken as 100 per cent and the circulation of the other papers represented as percentages of that. The figures for circulation were taken from Ayer & Sons' *Newspaper Annual and Directory*, 1910.

## CHAPTER VI

### ANALYSIS OF CASES

Limitations of space compel substitution of a mere classification of the material for the actual evidence collected. The evidence consists then of exhibits of cases in which there is proof of the influence of the newspaper upon anti-social activity.

The actual number of cases of this sort cited in comparison with the number assumed to exist is small, but the purpose in gathering instances in which anti-social stimuli were received

from the newspaper was not to make an exhaustive list of such cases. That would have been impossible within the limited time and with the facilities available. The purpose was to establish the existence, not the full quantitative extent, of anti-social newspaper influence. The machinery for getting at these cases was very inadequate, because the questionnaire method alone was available, and because this method is not one likely to bring either numerous or detailed results. Few cases are, as yet, to be found in the literature of criminology<sup>1</sup> or in court records, because thus far the less obvious sources and causes of crime have been only slightly studied, and there was no means of getting information directly from persons influenced by the newspapers. Moreover, only cases of conscious suggestion<sup>2</sup> could be collected, that is, cases in which the relation between the newspaper as stimulus and the resulting response had been recognized at the time by the person involved and was thus remembered, that is, in which there could be introspective evidence of the relation. Of those that could be thus introspectively ascertained, only a certain proportion, in actual fact, would be remembered by the persons themselves, and still fewer by third persons to whom confessions of such connections were made.

People do not always remember the sources of their ideas, impulses, and acts. For example, they frequently do not remember why they buy certain kinds of goods, or go to certain tailors. They forget that specific advertisements induced them to go, or else they may never have established in consciousness the connection between the advertisement and their activity. (Cf. Scott, *Psychology of Advertising*, 142, 145, 220 ff.) Just as the connection between the advertisement and the act is frequently forgotten or

<sup>1</sup> Those cases which do appear in the literature of criminology are to be found chiefly in the work of the French and Italian writers. There are, however, statements by American authorities on criminology to the effect that the press is responsible for anti-social activities. Cf. Philip A. Parsons, "Responsibility for Crime, An Investigation of the Nature and Causes of Crime and a Means of Its Prevention," *Columbia University Studies in Political Science*, XXXIV, No. 3, p. 190; Maurice Parmelee, *op. cit.*, 260; C. R. Henderson, *An Introduction to the Study of the Dependent, Defective, and Delinquent Classes* (2d ed., enlarged and revised; D. C. Heath Co., 1893), 139. Criminal court and juvenile court records do not as yet include these data.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. chap. iii.

never recognized, so in the commission of crime the source of the stimuli is as infrequently recognized or as often forgotten.

Moreover, of the whole number of cases remembered, only certain ones would be confessed to other persons. This number would be likely to include cases of crime alone and few cases of other anti-social activity, the former being the more likely to come to official or public notice. Finally there are comparatively few reports or records of such cases, possibly because people dealing with offenders have not as yet had their attention on this unconscious cause of crime as much as on other more obvious, because more conscious, causes. The fact that a number of those to whom question-blanks were sent refer to cases of which they have not preserved any memorandum and which consequently they do not describe shows the lack of close attention to this cause of crime. Therefore, it is clear that the number of cases of newspaper suggestion to anti-social activity which it would be possible to collect at the present time would be no adequate measure of the extent to which the newspaper has actually operated as a factor in causing anti-social acts.

The evidence of the existence of newspaper suggestion to anti-social activity which has been collected in the course of this study may be classified as follows:

1. Direct introspective evidence of such connection, confessed in every case to some third person, and the details of the act described by this person.

2. Direct introspective evidence of such connection, confessed to some third person, but the nature of the act and the details of the act not given.

3. Cases described in the newspapers themselves and stated by the newspapers to have been caused by reading newspaper accounts of similar crimes.

4. Statements from persons in close contact with criminals and other social offenders, to the effect that this suggestion exists, but containing no description of particular cases.

The exhibits which have been collected under these heads represent a mass of both direct and indirect evidence of the sug-

gestive influence of the newspaper on anti-social activity gathered from a wide range of territory and from many different sources. The evidence does not seek or claim to be coextensive with the actual extent of newspaper influence on anti-social activity, but it does establish its existence and indirectly suggests its extent.<sup>3</sup>

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

1. *Summary and conclusions.*—The object of the present study has been to show a causal connection between the newspaper and crime and other anti-social activity. In how far and in what manner this has been done a summary of the previous chapters will show.<sup>1</sup>

Chap. iii explains the psychological process by which newspaper influences operate on activity, and lays the theoretical basis for the consideration of cases of newspaper suggestion and of forms of newspaper stimuli. The conclusion reached in this connection is that the newspaper can enter into activity in all of the ways in which it can influence the nervous set, i.e., it may be the source of initial images, ideas, or impulses that are now either the fringe or the focus of a present act, or it may be a present stimulus calling out images, ideas, or impulses that are already present.

In chap. iv a method was worked out on the basis of these principles for analyzing the amount and kinds of anti-social matter in newspapers; a definition of anti-social matter was determined upon different from the definitions hitherto employed, and founded on an objective and socially constructive basis, that is, a basis that is able to take care of all anti-social relations between the newspaper and activity and based upon a body of psychological and psychiatric facts—a definition, conse-

<sup>3</sup> Chap. vi, as submitted for publication, contained a mass of evidence which the editor was compelled to omit for lack of space. What appears here represents the material so edited.—EDITOR.

<sup>1</sup> The concluding chapter was written to accompany chap. vi in its original form with the entire mass of evidence and detailed discussion of evidence included.

quently, both more and less inclusive, and more functional, than the juridical definition.

In chap. v the results obtained by an analysis of newspapers on the basis of the foregoing definition were given in several tables representing a comparative and intensive study of approximately 57 papers for three different dates, of the general news and literary and pictorial sections of the *Chicago E*—— and *Chicago D*—— for one month, of the general news sections of three New York papers, the *New York C*——, the *New York B*——, and the *New York A*——, and of the *Denver G*—— for seven corresponding dates, a comparison of four sections of all the papers studied, a comparison of the six papers above mentioned by name for common dates as to relative apportionment of matter and percentages of anti-social matter in relation to the total matter in each paper, and finally a diagrammatic representation of the relation between certain percentages of crime in the six papers mentioned by name and the circulation of those papers.

Chap. vi was concerned with an analysis of typical cases of American newspaper suggestion, as well as with a mass of evidence from foreign newspapers, from 'analogous sources of anti-social suggestion, such as the yellow novel, moving pictures, etc., and also with the presentation of the opinions of experts in penal, judicial, and journalistic matters tending to confirm the general thesis. Also an incidental account of movements initiated and practical steps taken on the basis of a belief in, or of positive proof of, the existence of this anti-social suggestion was given.

The results of the analysis of the anti-social matter in the six papers mentioned specifically above show the highest percentage of the kind of news which is an obvious medium of suggestion considered on the basis of a comparison of news alone, to be 20.02 and the lowest, 5.91; while an estimate based upon all mention of anti-social news makes the highest percentage 42.47 and the lowest, 18.90. The amount of news alone which should be withdrawn from the newspaper columns is more nearly represented by the figures shown in column 3 of

the tables, 23.02 being the highest percentage there, and the lowest, 7.94. This, however, is exclusive of forms of anti-social matter other than that included in the news proper. The percentage of all kinds of anti-social matter out of the entire paper which should be removed, a figure found by relating the sum of inches in column 3 in all the papers to the total space exclusive of advertisements, is 8.11.

One of the most significant results of this analysis comes out in the figures relating to the comparative percentages of anti-social matter in the editorial and news columns. Given a certain amount of anti-social matter in the news columns, the question arises whether the editorial columns are an adequate offset to this, that is, whether this anti-social news is so treated in editorials as to interpret it for those for whom it would be suggestive in an anti-social direction—provided, of course, that the editorial section can so offset the effect of the news columns. In the paper whose news columns contain the highest average percentage of anti-social news, i.e., 20.02 per cent, the editorial columns contain only 6.58 per cent of anti-social matter. But all of this matter is treated from an anti-social rather than from a socially constructive standpoint. Here, then, the reader gets no counter-evaluative stimuli to the news columns. The paper whose news columns contained the lowest average percentage of anti-social news—5.91—devoted 10.37 per cent of its editorial space to a discussion of anti-social facts from a constructively social viewpoint, and 4.07 per cent to a discussion of anti-social facts from an anti-social viewpoint. Here, also, the editorial columns are by no means an adequate offset for the anti-social effect of the news columns—granting that the editorials are as often read as are the news items, an assumption which is not borne out by fact.

It appears from chap. vi that the newspaper leads to anti-social activity in a number of ways. These may be summed up by saying that it influences people directly, both unconsciously and consciously, to commit anti-social acts. It also has a more indirect anti-social influence on public opinion during criminal trials through its accounts of these trials and through its partisan



selection of evidence; and, finally, it aids in building up anti-social standards, and thus in preparing the way for anti-social acts.

Finally, the results from the analyses of the papers are based upon a comparatively extensive number of issues of papers (203), comprising 57 different American newspapers. The percentages, therefore, constitute representative figures, both as to number and kind of papers and total number of issues studied.

The evidence collected for chap. vi unquestionably establishes the *existence* of suggestion to anti-social activity, and indirectly suggests its *extent*. Cases of direct newspaper suggestion to crime and other anti-social activity, cases of exactly analogous suggestion through the similar medium of literature, also similar cases of suggestion through moving-picture shows, theater representations, etc., along with a large body of facts testifying to a wide experience and conviction on the part of experts and others that the suggestion exists, were presented in support of the argument.

II. Newspapers and other interests are accustomed to object to evidence of the kind here presented, that the persons who are alleged to have been so influenced would have committed the anti-social acts any way. This objection, however, is either based upon the false assumption that criminals and other social offenders are born such, or represents a failure to raise the question of what makes the offender, if he is not born. Modern and scientific criminology does not recognize the existence of the born criminal or offender. If criminals are made, and not born such, they have to acquire their anti-social habits somewhere. The evidence here given has shown beyond question that the newspaper is one of the means by which people are set to acquiring anti-social habits and to committing anti-social acts.

Moreover, the newspaper itself admits an analogous suggestive influence in other fields.<sup>2</sup> The psychological principle, as well as the evidence of actual fact, is the same in both cases.

III. *Recommendations for Changes in the Newspaper.*—  
(1) The newspaper is a tremendous influence in the community. Its stimuli reach an enormous number of persons and reach them

<sup>2</sup> Instances were collected for chap. vi, but not published here.

frequently and insistently. It should, therefore, be an educative and dependable medium. Its possible educative value has scarcely been realized. Suggestive anti-social matter should be excluded from it. This does not mean that all mention of anti-social matters should be excluded. It is desirable that the public should be informed on all matters which they can assist in improving. But the news which gives them the information should not be couched in terms or presented in forms and details which make it criminally suggestive or factually misleading. It is possible to deal with anti-social matters in such a manner as to minimize the possibility of suggestion to anti-social activity by confining the treatment to bare statements of fact, by selecting such facts only as are necessary to constructive action in the matter.<sup>3</sup> It is likewise possible to use all of the media which contribute so largely to anti-social results in gaining increased social results. Many of these methods constitute a technique ready made for educative purposes. Large type, vivid and picturesque writing, illustrations, colored type, diagrams, etc., are just as easily the media of social as of anti-social suggestion and when the content conveyed by them is of a social character they are indispensable for readers who are fatigued, or who read in poor light.

(2) There are, however, strong forces working against such changes as have been suggested, at the present time. Commercial influences operating upon the policy of newspapers serve to suppress facts important to the public. Any accident, theft, crime, which is likely to react unfavorably on the buying public is not coupled with the name of the firm with whom it occurs. For example, if an accident occurs in a State Street department store in Chicago, whether due to fault of the company or to some other cause, the newspapers do not mention specifically where it occurred, because such mention hurts the store's trade.

The newspaper is also accustomed to play up or distort facts when such a course pays. An example of this is to be found in the fact that while the opera *Salome* was under fire in Chicago and not yet suspended, some of the Chicago papers and likewise

<sup>3</sup> See Clifford G. Roe's *Panders and their White Slaves* (Revell, 1910).

Cleveland papers (for which city the opera was booked after Chicago) took the side of the opera and minimized its suggestiveness.

The fact that the newspapers work for a margin of sales also strongly influences their policy in printing anti-social matter. There is a circulation which can be pretty definitely counted upon, i.e., a certain number of people buy papers constantly for the news regardless of the content. Beyond this, featuring, doctoring, and faking draw a wide circle of buyers who would not otherwise be attracted. For example, the sporting section is usually printed on colored paper and placed on the outside of the evening paper for the purpose of attracting this margin of sales among a class who are not generally interested in the political and social news of the day. Likewise there are girls who would not buy a conservatively gotten-up paper, i.e., one dealing with the essential and standard facts of life presented in an uncolored and dependable manner, who will buy a copy which bears the caption in large red type, *Turns Revolver Upon Woman, Shoots Self*.

In short, advertising columns and pecuniary reward muzzle the news columns and distort and color the facts which they contain, thus destroying their accuracy and utility and leading to anti-social presentations. When any argument is made for the control of newspaper presentations, however, it is met by the time-honored appeal to freedom of discussion. But, as an answer to this appeal, it should be remembered (1) that as a matter of fact the public does not get freedom of discussion in the newspaper. It gets discussion which is strictly censored in the ways mentioned above, in large part by special interests and the desire for gains at the cost of the public; and (2) that as a principle, freedom of discussion is useful and desirable only when it secures advantageous social results. Freedom of discussion apart from its results is not in itself a worthy end.

(3) Endowed and public-owned newspapers have been proposed as remedies for the present evils springing from a system of private-owned newspapers. While public-owned newspapers might secure the kind of news which is desirable—at least in

some respects—they are such a far-off contingency that it is more practical to consider proposals which can be put into operation more quickly. The endowed newspaper, as an adequate solution of the problem, is at present as impracticable as the public-owned newspaper. It would moreover be but a partial relief, so long as private-owned newspapers were in the field.

(4) Therefore it is important to consider methods possible at present.

(a) We need new and adequately enforced laws defining strictly the power of newspapers to deal with news, laws analogous to those already in operation in regard to the use of the mails, billboards, etc. Such laws would, as a matter of fact, in many cases be mere formulations of practices already in vogue. Courts both in the United States and England have already shown their power to restrain newspapers from, or to punish them for, detailing certain types of anti-social facts.

(b) Judges should recognize in their decisions the facts already known regarding anti-social suggestion.

(c) Public opinion needs to be educated to secure support for constructive legislation along this line and to support such laws as we have or as may be made.

(d) Further investigation of the relation of newspaper suggestion and other suggestion to crime and other anti-social activity should be made, and public officials, such as probation officers, juvenile court judges and other judges, superintendents of institutions, etc., should be encouraged and required to keep records of cases of such connection. In this way a better basis for activity regarding the newspapers could be established.